26/2/74

(not David Michael)

— "Sir, you are all for sorrow

(1)

Tuesday ~~March~~ Feb 26 1974

Dearest René

C/- The Cottle Company of Mary
Calvary Nursing Home
Sudbury Hill
Harrow-on-the-Hill
Middlesex

Yr letter with enclosed inscription reached me just now — an hour ago that is, & I am writing this now at once or it may get delayed — I mean delayed by me and I already have at least six letters from you unanswered but I'm almost too ashamed to write this one I ask your forgiveness for my ~~disinvoltura~~ discourtesy (can't spell it) & negligence — for such it must seem, but I have in fact written more than one ~~overlong~~ over-long letter & then thrown it away as being boring & not what I wanted to say. One I wrote ~~back~~ dated Jan 8th & that was about sixteen pages — that's got lost it was in answer to yr typescript in which you carefully stated yr position ~~re Nelson~~ concerning the 'utile' & the 'extra-utile' — & how you could not disavow what you tried subsidiarily to my views (or any my statement of those views) and that business of Nelson's signal as compared with what was actually used. I could not understand how what I said in the Introduction to The Ancient Mariner touching that signal involved the matter, the exceedingly complex matter, of what we'll call for convenience pro D'Caird & anti Caird, for what I said was that Nelson's original words "Nelson confides that every man will do his duty" was in every sense better than "England expects etc."

Better because more true, more exact and far better as English for who could deny the 'confides' is not only ~~one~~ hundred times more moving but also, ~~more~~, within the context, more exact & true, hits the ~~nail~~ nail square on the head.

Overleaf

N.B. None of this letter is to be read though ~~I~~ so excuse any incomprehensible words or sentences in my contein. My eyes are giving me much trouble; Confound it. Dai

PS Tell Joan it's a kind word that my sister died last week she had been ailing a good while but mercifully died in peace ~~&~~ without pain. Love for both of ea.

D.

It's forgotten who it was, I mean the Officer who suggested ~~the England~~ that should not 'England' replace 'Nelson'? was, I suppose, overcome by a fit of enthusiasm ~~for England~~ of a patriotic nature but not usually expressed by Officers of the Senior Service and in this instance ~~[illegible] some Concept~~ proposing a Concept in place of a concrete ~~but~~ very real man who was his Commander & very much in command, & much beloved by the men of that Command :— he did ~~expect~~ 'confide,' it was the exact word, in the personnel of this fleet. But naturally it was impossible for him to refuse the suggested 'England'.

The replacement of 'confides' by 'expects', owing to there being a single pennant for 'expects' whereas confides would have required five pennants. To shell it out, was, for other reasons, allowed. The English fleet was slowly nearing the enemy. Collingwood is recorded as saying 'I wish Lord Nelson would stop signalling the Fleet more signals we know precisely what our actions to be' Or words to effect, I quote from a work that, of course, I have not with me here.

But I write this boring letter only to say that I ~~can't see~~ couldn't see the point, and can't know about the business of 'use' & 'sign' are involved, but merely to say that the great Admiral's form of words was superior, accurate, rational & true, whereas what was substituted ~~was~~ for it was a poor second in all respects.

But my mislaid letter had a great deal more in an attempt to answer yours, than this bit about Nelson. But making the expressing regret for being so long in answering or even acknowledging your various splendid letters to me. As a matter of fact I've

a pile of neglected or half written letters,
& I've been struggling to get a thing done for Agenda
that I had promised William Cookson I would get
done in time - for he especially wanted it for an
issue of Agenda to coincide with Faber's publication
of various fragments in book form & called The Sleeping Lord
& other fragments, - the publication date of which is fixed to
be March 25th. Which I managed to get part of
a thing ready for William Cookson - it's provisionally called
the Kensington Mass. He is very grateful that I at
least managed to get part of it ready last week
as the printers especially owing to the "three day weeks"
had to have it in page proof form by I think it was
last Friday.

Yes, I had heard from Douglas C. that he
was giving a reading of various bits
of my various stuff & that the Mermaid
Theatre was, he hoped, involved in it
& that you were coming from "the land of
the saints & scholars" - this I could hardly
believe but in any case I do thank you
René, knowing what a bore it is
for you to come to the island
from your home in Shanagarry.

Yes, indeed I thought your Death of
Hector superb - it has that same
fierce ring that you got in the Chanson de
Roland. More than two chaps
I know had by good fortune come across
that & have asked me how on earth
they had never seen it before & said
that it was so vastly better than any
of the Eng. trans - the two or three
people who've spoken of it thus, were
all students or may be tutors at
Universities & were particularly
sorry & couldn't understand how
it had managed to be unknown to them.

To return to your inscriptions, I am still astonished
how you made to make them without endless
corrections & alterations, is the form. I can't
conceive how you manage it — that direct manner,
it takes me hours & hours with changes of form &
wipyrout to paint any bit of 'lettering'
in order to get the varied parts
conflow or become part of the whole.

I think the photograph you enclose with yr letter
the Hector's Death one shd the Death of Hector
escape the difficulty & mention some taping
scheme back, of that make too 'curvy'
letters based on what used to be called
'Hiberno-Anglo' script. The Latin Letter-forms
conserve horizontal & vertical no matter
how most one modifies the forms, perhaps
that is why I, & generally speaking, have stuck
to the Roman forms. For I always came
a cropper when I tried to use any other.'

Yes, I quite understand what the illustration
to Hector. When one likes a chap one
naturally likes his work but the real
trouble is, as in matter, the process of
reproduction is a very difficult thing for
the original work. Good Lord! I know
all about that. To my great discomfort
& on occasions, anger & dismay.
Reading the bottom of (4) & I can
meant to say much more but this.

Oh yes, the errors in chronology
in various catalogues are the bloody
limit. I should be most grateful
to you, should you find it convenient
to remark on this matter. For one thing
the insertion of
'Michael' on the first line of the catalogue
of the exhibit of last year — David Michael
Jones born in Kent on Nov 1st 1895.
Not that it matters a damn but is
untrue. Professionally & privately
my name is David Jones. Circa 1921
Eng. fr. as the custom is, or was,
inserted an extra name & became of my birthday

Love to Jean & of course to Yourself
Yours ever David

Much

You said it should be
French Gothic
Textura Quadrata

Given for All Saints Day, Michael was considered to be
for 1895 & as I am known professionally as David Jones
reviews & journalists in the U.S.A. have taken to sticking
the chaps in the U.S.A. only then is future it stick to the name I use professionally for many years
I had made the correction in the Catalogue but
Know a quick & energetic worker & somewhat
any matter he takes in hand. But this also means
may well [illegible] and in print [illegible]
Much stop Dearest René — or the person who
Yours, Gino's main [illegible] & your help in all
Only yesterday, in the last line of the fragment of
& wanted the form originally, but having